The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occuring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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VOL. 10. NO. 32. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1920. WHOLE NO. 500.

LABOR'S NONPARTISAN CAMPAIGN RESULTED IN MANY GAINS: : : :

Organized labor's 1920 nonpartisan political campaign was the most intelligent and vigorous in the history of the A. F. of L.

Scores of reactionaries have been retired to private life and the workers' agitation for remedial legislation and constructive statesmanship has been impressed upon the public mind.

But of greater importance is the education and development of the workers, their intellectual awakening, their expanded capacity, their increased independence and their greater faith in themselves, their union and its nonpartisan policy.

Reaction is aghast when workers demand an accounting by office holders. The publication of records hurt—this was a shot "below the water line," and special privilege howled, "Compers is trying to de-liver the labor vote."

What did you do, not what you say?" was labor's reply to the charges, the rhetoric and flag waving of plunder and graft.

Labor's greatest victory is the awakening of labor.

The army of fighters for right has been recruited by the tens of thousands. These recruits feel new thrills in the struggle for freedom.

They now realize the meaning of "government of, by and for the people."

They have "sensed" their power. They understand labor's political program. This program was given its greatest indorsement in this campaign by the general breaking down of party fences, and the collapse of party discipline. Labor has won its 40-year agitation for independent voting.

One political campaign or one strike is but a skirmish in labor's long fight for justice. Labor is never defeated. Every movement is a victory. Out of every activity comes experience, education, solidarity, capacity, determination.

All these have been acquired in the present campaign.

Labor was never more intelligent than today. It was never more united and confident and enthusiastic.

These are the elements in the long list of reactionaries whose defeat will not be forgotten by those of the plunder crew who escaped labor's wrath and who will attempt to postpone their day of judgment by "whistling through the graveyard."

COAL LANDS UNWORKED MONOPOLY IN CONTROL

Altoona, Pa., Oct. 26.—This city is close to rich coal deposits, but one-half of the people are servants, and one-half of the remainder are without a sufficient supply for the winter, says the Altoona Timesdispatch. This newspaper surveyed the city coal fields and arrived at these conclusions:

Mineral rights are monopolized.

Operating companies are few.

Coal brokers must get their pound of flesh.

Transportation is too expensive.

"In Somerset county," says the Times-Tribune, "there are rich deposits, and mine openings, almost without number, but control of practically all the coal is vested in a few large companies.

"Thousands of acres of the coal lands held by these great corporations are unworked and unless some commercial or practical railway conference comes, will probably not be worked for generations to come.

"Because the independent purchases by the great corporations, near a great consuming community, the cost of mining coal and getting it to the truck is so great, due to the cost of gas and oil, the inability to get cars for wagon mine loading except under certain almost prohibitive restrictions."

The Times-Tribune quotes small operators and independent handlers of coal rights as declaring that the only solution to cheaper coal, with ever-increasing mercury rise, is for the government to so control the workings and output of the oil and minerals of the country as to make the minimum of cost for the maximum of service, with the ultimate absolute elimination of all middle men and coal operation. To this there must be added good roads at public expense, leading to and from the mines.

FIGHT FROM INSIDE.

Washington, Oct. 23.—The Stars and Stripes, formerly the official newspaper of the American expeditionary forces, tells ex-service men of "class action methods and whirlwind training, to do their talking in convention, and not remain silent while the resolution is being put on, and then object.

The Stars and Stripes says "a great many ex-service men" discount the compulsory military training, and that fact is "a real effort to Prussianize America."

The paper says that the intervention of the American legion this year is a direct result of labor opposition, and at the recent Washington convention of the veterans of labor it was debated that "it is little."

"The men who disagree with the policy of the organizations content themselves with staying out and then complaining about what the organizations do," says the Stars and Stripes.

"As for the men who belong to the organizations, but who are too timid or uncertain of their convictions to their beliefs, and are therefore content for the nonce to play mining policies, it is obvious that they need experience and training in the art of fighting for their beliefs in public expression and debate that will get them in their legion or V. F. W. posts."

PRESSMEN CONFER.

Pressmen's Home, Tenn., Oct. 26.—The twenty-eighth convention of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America, the largest and most harmonious ever held by that organization. Practically every local in the United States and Province of Canada was represented.

The board of directors was authorized to co-operate with the A. F. of L. in establishing a joint fund of all International organizations to oppose the non-union shop policy of the Employers' Association of the United States. Other legislation enacted was:

Increased death benefit to $500 and strike benefits to $11, increased salaries of officers, approximately $39 per cent. Approved A. F. of L. non-partisan political policy.

Gompers's address and administration of President Berry will but one discussing very much. Increased per capita tax to international pressmen to 75c a month and pressmen to $1.90 a month.

The reports indicate the financial assets of the union, including its publication, to be on hand, are more than $2,000,000.

ANTI-UNIONISTS QUIT.

Worcester, Mass., Oct. 26.—The 17-months' strike of iron molders against the Reed-Prentice and the Whitcomb-Blaisdell companies was brought about the resignations of the general managers of the two concerns. These gentlemen are prominent in national anti-trade union organization and, it is said, one-half ago gadly announced that Talbots along would establish on the non-union shop basis.

The iron molders replied: "Go to it, but we won't work for you." It is whispered that the companies have had a hard time to get help and parts. Much of this money was used to import strikebreakers and thugs.

WHAT IS PUBLIC'S LIMIT?

Atlantic City, N. J., Oct. 25.—Our tremendous war debt, which will be a handicap for future prosperity, will prevent prices dropping to the prewar level, said Will H. Booth, a New York financier, in a speech in this city.

Another factor, said the speaker, will be public opinion, responding to the law of supply and demand.

"Public opinion is a powerful factor in how much will the public stand. If they refused to be gouged, prices will drop."

DEFEND UNION SHOP.

Philadelphia, Oct. 25.—The central labor union is considering an agitation against the non-union shop declaration of the chamber of commerce of the United States.

CARPENTERS GAIN.

Oklahoma City, Oct. 20.—Organized carpenters won their demand that wages be increased from 12½ to 15c an hour. Anti-union employers promised above the increase, but the expected fight did not materialize.

LABOR MARCHES ON; CAN NOT BE SWERVED

Chicago, Oct. 25.—"It is impossible to kill the labor movement, because it is a religion that is deep-rooted in every life of man on this planet," writes Editor Hohmann, editor of the Locomotive Engineers' Journal, in spirit of workers in this industry who have waged many gallant and successful fights against demoniac conditions.

"Labor is," continues the labor editor, "that the labor movement can not be estimated. But every movement having for its purpose the advancement of the cause of humanity is hailed now and again. And temporary defeats are not always without their compensation, since they enable us to better realize our shortcomings and set about to remedy them.

"This prompts us to say—paradoxical though it may seem—that labor never loses, but has ever its ultimate victory. For, after all, material losses are but temporary setbacks in the order of things; and whether labor wins or loses, in fact stands out unchallenged: The labor movement goes on winning, winning—in sunshine and in rain, in storm and in calm—all along the line.

"That is why we and other workers in the labor cause are never discouraged. For, after all, we are temporarily worsted in the open struggle, the capitalists get control stock of our position, remedy our shortcomings and come up smiling for the fray.

"For we know that however much our enemies may assail the labor movement, however much its traitors may try to stab it in the back, the labor movement will live, for good of humanity, because it is a living, moving, pulsating body with soul and spirit, and as such can never die."

LIVING WAGE FIRST.

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WORKERS' JAP STAND FINALLY AGREED TO

San Francisco, Oct. 26.—If the American government and the public generally hearkened to labor a quarter of a century ago, the present Japanese question, which has become international, would be unknown.

The usual happened, however. When the opportunity for cheap labor was presented to employers. Business men and land owners talked of "equal opportunity for all" and ignored the workers' claim that the people, as a whole, are the parents and lower than American would necessarily be weaker American social structures. Labor has presented this argument against low wages, against child labor and against unrestricted immigration, only to be scoffed at by those who refuse to see beyond today.

The yellow peril is now a menace on the Pacific coast. The Japs are large land owners and are threatening the white farmer with extinction. The small business man is also affected and the forces that laughed at labor in the late 70s and early 80s when it demanded Oriental exclusion, are now howling for help.

Those who ignored labor now accept its logic, but assail the Japs. They agree that the white worker can not compete with Jap standards.

Labor suggests that these latter day opponents of Oriental immigration give heed to other warnings by labor on the ultimate menace of cheap labor, low wages, long hours and other social ills that will degrade a free people.

THE MORAL OF TWO WILLS.

Washington, Oct. 20.—This week the public press stated that the wills of the late Andrew Carnegie and William C. Gorgas, former surgeon general of the United States army, were filed.

The ironmaster's estate is valued at approximately twenty million dollars, and the medical man's in excess of one million.

The ironmaster was long in the public eye, while the medical man was known to a comparatively few. His views did not appeal to public opinion, but Mr. Gorgas at what he believed was the root of poverty by his opposition to the practice of holding land out of use. He was a believer in high wages, and insisted that the increase in the ability of the people to live well and to get better food and better clothing."

In a speech in Cincinnati, six years ago, he said:

"If I should again go into a community such as Cuba or Panama, and were asked to select one sanitary measure, but to give me poverty is an enduring monument.

STATE INSURANCE BEST.

Olympia, Wash., Oct. 20.—Nine years' experience with the Washington state plan of industrial insurance discloses that it is the best insurance in the world, says the state insurance department in its biennial report.

"Every dollar paid in by the employers of this state is used solely to compensate their injured workmen, and not one dollar is diverted to any other purpose.

"The cost of administering the law, which is provided for by a special appropriation, has been less than 7 per cent. It has been generally admitted by insurance companies have been unable to carry the compensation cost of private insurance for less than 54 cents out of each dollar's worth of insurance written. In other words, it has cost them 54 cents in order to get 46 cents' worth to the insured, and even at that this is a limited insurance as they do not pay for the second injury. Many have joined the workers from picketing. Do appeal to the federal court of appeals in the case of strike and lockout and the company has carried the case to the United States supreme court, where it was argued December 13, 14, and again on October 5, this year.

The court's decision will be of far-reaching effect as to trade unionists and to employers.

WANT WAGES REDUCED.

New York, Oct. 26.—Organized teamsters in this city have asked for wage increases, and the bosses have formed a league to resist and have declared for wage reductions and the 10-hour day.

The employers' league have given "generous contribution" through price reduction in the cost of truck-ing, and can so on hand, are more than $2,000,000.

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ALABAMA COAL MEN USE BLACKLIST LASH

Birmingham, Ala., Oct. 26.—The bull whip that swung across the backs of southern slaves 60 years ago has been replaced by the blacklist lash in the hands of Alabama coal owners against striking employes who are demanding a living wage.

The coal owners have refused to accept the award made by the bituminous coal commission, appointed by the president last fall when the nation-wide strike of miners was put off.

The miners are in possession of, letters and notices issued by the Tennessee coal, iron and railroad company, a steel trust unit, which show that many workers are blacklisted and are forever barred from employment by this company, with one lit in possession of the strikers.

Some of over half a hundred men are given as "permanently dismissed for agitation."

Other lists include those who are "undesirable" and who are charged with "enticing labor from this district."

That the mine owners are fearful that the open shop drive and blacklist practice is generally known is indicated by interrogations put to Judge Clarem, employment officer, to all employment clerks, that hereafter applicants for work must not be stated in the files. "We want to do away with this," writes McClaren.

As an aid to this blacklist system, the coal operators have established a peonage system and armed guards patrol the company's mining camps. The miners show how passes that are issued to them, in addition to their peonage contracts.

Behind the blacklist lash and the peonage system is the strikebreaker, and his state troops to enforce the military order against assemblage and free speech. Accounts of both these outrages or to discuss the miners' wrongs. The strikers demand that Gen. Steiner be as vigilant in disarming company thugs as in assisting them. Arms are issued the strikers. As an added restriction, the miners are forbidden to march on the public highways.

Despite every denial of constitutional guarantees, the miners refuse to go back to the mines under former conditions. Every attempt to break the strike has met stalwart opposition.

HUGE HOTEL PROFITS.

Boston, Oct. 26.—A conference between hotel men and District Attorney Gallagher on excessive charges in hotel orders a statement that these hotel men were "willing to co-operate" was before was received with loud laughter.

To support his claim the attorney made public a statement by a certain hotel explaining about the high cost of living in this city. In urging the public to buy this stock, it is stated that large hotels are earning on their large interests and the stock is hardly quoted on the exchange.

"On the basis on which the business now is conducted and will continue," explains the statement, "the net earnings of the Statler hotels will be four and one-half times the first preferred stock dividend requirements, and twice the second preferred dividend requirements. The net current earnings are at the rate of seven and one-half times the dividend requirements on the first preferred and two and one-half times the dividend requirements on the second preferred."

HOIST WHITE FLAG.

Seattle, Oct. 26.—The associated employers of this city have hoisted the flag in its war on union labor in this city. Officers of the chamber of commerce were issued a call for a new order of things.

Some 175 members of the chamber of commerce were leading figures in the associated industries. In the new regime, that the chamber speak in future for the employers. Under the new regime, several declarations that the trade union movement can not accept, but the important thing is employers have concluded that negotiation and conference instead of opposition to organized labor.

This city has been the scene of much turmoil during the past several months, and employers now see the reputation Seattle as a result of their labor baiting has been harmful to the community.

COAL PRODUCTION GROWS.

Washington, Oct. 26.—Production of bituminous coal has increased from the 12,000,000 tons weekly estimated to be necessary to eliminate any shortage before the end of the year during the week ended October 16 production was 12,121,000 tons, an increase of 44,000 tons over the preceding week.

The average production per working day during the week ended October 16 was 2,022,000 tons, which is the highest record since the armistice. Steady increase in the production of anthracite is also recorded.

PACKERS ARE INDICTED.

New York, Oct. 26.—A federal indictment charging a $31,000,000 beef trust was returned against Armour & Co., Chicago meat packers, and Swift & Co., members of their concern, charging profiteering in violation of the Lever act, it was learned today.

It is charged that New Zealand lambs, costing less than 6 cents a pound, were sold by 24 and 25 cents a pound. This was declared to be unreasonable profiteering. The indictment "can't understand" the federal jury's action.

$31,000,000 TO EUROPE.

Washington, Oct. 26.—The American Red Cross expended $31,000,000 in Europe, the details will appear in the forthcoming annual report, it is now understood. The report is now being considered by the executive committee. Judge Payne and Henry P. Davison, chairman of the war council, are expected to return from the conference of the league of nations council in London, Nov. 1.

BUSINESS ATTRACTS.

Washington, Oct. 26.—Twenty-five per cent of all the pupils in the country are taking commercial courses, according to a bulletin issued by the federal board for vocational education. These courses consist mainly of bookkeeping and stenography.

BANKERS LECTURE WORKERS WHILE TRUSTS CLOSE MILLS

Washington, Oct. 20.—With mills and factories closing down and operating on short time all over the country, the American bankers' association, at its annual convention in this city, called on labor to "produce more" that prices may be reduced.

The insolence of these money lenders brought spirited replies from Samuel Gompers and Secretary Morrison of the A. F. of L. President Gompers declared that "the bankers' remedy for the hard times would shock the nation. Secretary Morrison called attention to the shutting down of the mills, and asked if the bankers believed they could find any one but themselves.

"The outlook," said President Gompers, "would be more encouraging if the money powers in control of production were not themselves responsible for the restriction of production for the purpose of maintaining fabulous prices.

"The time has come for a careful survey of the activities of bankers and others intrusted with the processes of production and distribution of the world's needs. The workers have evidence that as the result of analysis of the present business situation, the stock of goods and that those responding to an inordinate desire for gold will be compelled to relieve the suffering of the people."

Director Morrison said:

"Let the bankers tell their story of the need for greater production and other things connected with it. We have been laid off. Let them tell the workers to work harder.

"The miners are smashing all production records, and yet we find the price of coal is prohibitive, with bankers lecturing workers on the need for greater production.

"The government's record of exports of manufactured goods does not sustain the bankers. Let them insist that the law of supply and demand for which they profess such high regard be permitted to operate. Let them call upon the trusts and combines to stop fixing prices and to stop closing mills and shops to maintain these prices.

"Our job is to take care of ourselves, but they are fooling no one else."

The bankers found themselves confronted by an awkward situation because of the charge by Comptroller of the Currency Williams that New York bankers were borrowing money from the government at 4½ and 6 per cent and loaning it for as high as 8, 20, 30 and 50 per cent. The bankers' convention adopted the usual method of those in the wrong and "passed the buck," according to the comptroller, have "made a huge profit, and official was not directly referred to, but the bankers deplored any move that would tend to shake the people's faith in the bankers.

The bankers' optimism appears to have a chip on his shoulder, and to date the bankers see not willing to meet the issue squarely, according to the comptroller, have "made a huge profit, and unless a check is put there will be a grab on the nation's commerce.

The comptroller answered the bankers' attack by the statement that the country's work basis is sound, a reply to facts that are sustained by sworn affidavits.

FUR WORKERS ENJOINED.

New York, Oct. 25.—Justice Newburger of the supreme court has rushed to the aid of bosses in their fight to enforce unfair conditions, who have been on strike for five weeks to enforce equitable working conditions.

Justice Newburger has issued an injunction. The men are associated with American institutions the court's order made as though we have no police power to enforce law, or jury trials to hear charges of law violation. According to the employers, thuggery and gang rule is the remedy, and an injunction is necessary to protect life.

Instead of suggesting to employers that the law provides for the punishment of violators, many of those sweeping "thou-shalt-not" edicts that slighted the heart of labor, the court issued an injunction. This order was issued on the one-sided affidavits of employers.

Justice Newburger and these employers are great believers in the American form of government for citizens.

But for workers are striking for the union shop, a 44-hour week, the right to work in decent conditions, arbitration of discharge cases and limiting overtime.

MURDER GANG SUED.

New Orleans, Oct. 20.—Attorneys for Sol Dacus, negro, have filed suit for $50,000 damages in the federal court against the murder gang of Plaquemines parish, parishes which killed several trade unionists November 22, 1919, while they were raiding the home of Dacus against the Great Southern Lumber company. At the time, Dacus lived in Bogalusa and was influential with negro workers and aided while trying to keep down the strike from being diverted into the racial issue. Dacus escaped the murderous company thugs who announced they would "get" him. White trade unionists warned him of his danger and he hid in the woods, but the thugs searched his home and terrified his family. The suit is based on the raiding of the union headquarters and demanded the negro. They were invited into the building and, when unarmed, fire with shot guns and rifles killing Dacus' brother and two others were unarmed. The murderers have not been apprehended. Dacus is trying to find them.

JUDGE ORDERS STRIKE.

New York, Oct. 20.—Federal Judge Mayer has ordered the receiver for the Brooklyn Rapid Transit company to call a strike of the union system because they are losing money.

The court has supplemented this strike order as a public utility by issuing an injunction restraining the public service commission from going into any other court than the federal court to secure an injunction.

Newspapers shriek until they are blue in the face because men employed in a public utility strike for living conditions. Judge Mayer issued an injunction as meekly referred to as "unusual" by these fire-alarm editors.

'RAH FOR "REVOLUTION."

Lyon, Mass., Oct. 26.—The united (?) shoe workers, a "tyranny" of which workers that howls for "revolution," has signed a long-term contract with the shoe manufacturers. Wages are not increased. The members demanded $3 a day and instead it was submitted to a referendum, but the officials of these air powers said, "Nay."

And in the meantime—

Discussion of the "tyranny" of the United Boot and Shoe Workers' union will be resumed.

CO-OPS. ARE GROWING.

Marysville, Ill., Oct. 26.—The last report by the local co-operative society showed a dividend of $1,000 returned saving of $2,432.75 was paid to members. This is an 8 per cent dividend. It is based on the amount of purchases by each individual.

Paua, Ill., Oct. 26.—The co-operative store at this place has finally been opened for business. It has been paid and a substantial credit is announced.

ENGLISH UNEMPLOYED.

London, England, Oct. 20.—The prospect of unemployment this winter is being considered by the government. For the week ending September 24 there were 346,000 unemployed registered at labor exchanges. This is an increase of 24,000 over the figures for the previous week.

PUBLIC DOESN'T BENEFIT.

Indianapolis, Oct. 26.—Hog prices paid in this city to farmers on October 12 reached the lowest level since Dec. 12, 1917, according to the Commission men say it is doubtful if these prices will be higher.

ENGLISH OVERWORKED WILL SOON BE RARITY

London, England, Oct. 20.—The overworked Englishman's days will soon be a rarity, is the opinion of the chief inspector of factories and work shops, who says the shorter work day is rapidly replacing the old system of long, monotonous toil.

It is stated that shortened working hours has had a marked effect on wage earners, more so than by the increase in improvement in industrial conditions.

Better timekeeping, less fatigue and other details, is given as the accidents, despite the fact that more workers are employed, engineering (metal) trades, are other marked results.

With regard to sickness, the report cites a large factory where, under the old conditions, the number of absentees were 40 daily. Since the adoption of the 44-hour week, the daily number has dropped to 16 daily.

Much of interest to employers who have incessantly deplored the shortening of hours and insisted that a shorter work week is production would inevitably follow, is that, despite the shorter hours, the output was largely or entirely dependent on the worker, there was a substantial gain in production, indeed, in one wholesale tailoring establishment an increase of 20 per cent was reported. In another instance, a boot factory, where the hours of labor were cut from 54 hours 52 to 48 per week, there was a considerable increase in output.

SHORT HOURS ARE BEST.

Philadelphia, Oct. 26.—A man can produce more for his employer in an eight-hour day than on a 12-hour schedule, and as much money do better work, be more cheerful, and have more time for recreation.

These views, which sound like a trade union declaration, were expressed by Robert B. Wolf, vice president of the American society of mechanical engineers, in an address in this city.

Mr. Wolf presented his conclusions on the basis of a 16-year record of results attained by substituting the eight-hour day for the ten-hour system, particularly in the pulp industry, and more recently in the Fenimore mill of the Union bag and paper company.

Mr. Wolf attributed to three shifts the workers were paid the same rates for eight hours' work as they were getting for 12, and in return they had increased not only their total output but also its uniform quality, said Mr. Wolf.

LABOR LAW HELD VOID.

New Orleans, Oct. 20.—The state supreme court has declared void that portion of the Louisiana workmen's compensation act which provides that under certain conditions employers may contribute to a fund from a judge that they are able to meet financial obligations.

The court declared that the determination of the solvency of an employer under the compensation act is not a judicial question.

The law provides that an employer may contribute to the workmen's compensation insurance, or furnish bond that he is able to meet what may be paid to an injured employe, or secure a certificate from a district judge that he is able to meet the obligations. Judge Pujo has declared that portion of the act has been set aside.

POTTERS ADVANCE.

Atlantic City, N. J., Oct. 20.—Wage increases have been secured for pottery workers as a result of conference between the potters' association and the National brotherhood of operative potters. The new rates become effective November 1.

BRICKIES STAY ON GROUND.

Cleveland, Oct. 26.—Organized bricklayers, masons and plasterers have voted to stay on the job here. At the international convention of this organization a resolution was introduced by Delegate Wm. Green, of Ft. Wayne, Ind., the author's.

LABOR LAW INVALID.

Lansing, Mich., Oct. 20.—By a vote of six to two the state supreme court has declared void the law which prohibits operation of street cars from working more than six days in any one week. The state street railway company resisted the act.

FIGHT TEACHERS' UNION.

Fresno, Cal., Oct. 26.—Organized labor in this county is incensed over the dismissal of the "incompetents" who joined the board of education before the open shop agitation developed.